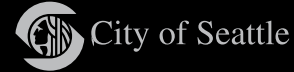
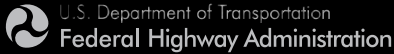


# The Alaskan Way Viaduct & Seawall Replacement Project

06.06



## What other options were evaluated?

### *No Replacement*

The cut-and-cover tunnel and elevated structure were chosen by WSDOT, the City of Seattle, and FHWA out of an original list of 76 concepts. Replacing the viaduct is a major project that will dramatically affect a critical transportation route through Seattle. Since this is a significant decision, ideas continue coming in, and people ask us to reconsider concepts previously eliminated. We have made diligent efforts to evaluate the promising suggestions. **This fact sheet is one in a series that describes a proposed idea, how it was evaluated, and why the project team determined it's not the best solution.** We cannot afford to wait forever to replace the viaduct and seawall, but public input is very important. When a final decision is made on a solution for replacing the viaduct, we want the public to understand how we came to that conclusion.

## Why was a 'no replacement' option proposed?

We hear several reasons why people believe it is the right solution:

- We should be less dependent on cars. The Seattle waterfront could be so much more if we tore down the viaduct and replaced it with parks, public gathering spaces, and a surface boulevard integrated into a fish-friendly shoreline.
- It seems far less expensive to tear down the viaduct and beef up our

transit system and street grid than to spend \$3 to \$4 billion building a tunnel.

- We'll have to do without the viaduct's capacity during many years of construction anyway, so why not make it permanent?

## What are some of the issues?

- **We'd love a cheaper solution, but the cost of congestion needs to be taken into account as well.** The 110,000 vehicles that currently use the viaduct each day can't be moved to I-5 and surface streets without severe congestion.

If the viaduct was not replaced, traffic along Alaskan Way would approximately quadruple to 35,000 - 56,000 vehicles per day. Compare that to the 10,000 vehicles that use Alaskan Way today, and you can see why congestion would last most of the day. Huge hills and bodies

## What did we study?

When members of the public propose an option, it is often just an idea they've had. We need a specific design or concept to evaluate. For this idea, we evaluated the following concept:

- Replace the viaduct with a four-lane surface street.
- Transit and local street improvements are expected to make up for the lost capacity.
- Some trips simply 'disappear' because drivers choose not to make them or travel elsewhere.



*Even with substantial growth in transit, the viaduct's capacity is still necessary.*

of water checking the region's landscape means that there are a very limited number of north-south routes we can use to get around.



*The Alaskan Way Viaduct carries 110,000 vehicles each day.*

is needed to support freight and the thriving Port of Seattle as well.

- **The surface boulevard would not necessarily be pedestrian-friendly.**

If the viaduct were removed, Alaskan Way would become the busiest street downtown, carrying more traffic than Mercer Street. With so much traffic shifted to street level, it won't be the walkable waterfront you'd expect without a viaduct. This level of traffic would make it difficult for people to get to waterfront businesses without forcing conflicts of uses between vehicles trying to get through downtown and the many bicyclists and pedestrians that use Alaskan Way. The cut-and-cover tunnel provides opportunities for a walkable waterfront by moving faster traffic underground, while the elevated structure will maintain current pedestrian conditions along the waterfront.

- **This proposal does not take into account future growth.** We are expecting 135,000 vehicles on SR 99 in 2030 - and 173,000 people using transit to the central business district in addition to those vehicles (about a 45% increase in today's transit riders to downtown). These projections are built into our traffic numbers - we are planning for substantial growth on transit. This north-south route

- **Improving transit to make up for the loss of SR 99 does not come cheap.** Transit agencies say they need \$37 million per year just to stay running during construction. With no replacement in sight, it would become much more expensive over time.

## What about a six-lane roadway?

We evaluated this as an alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement in March 2004. Called the Surface Alternative, it would replace the viaduct with a six-lane surface street on Alaskan Way. Traffic projections in the Draft EIS showed that it would reduce roadway capacity by 40-50 percent, causing substantial increases in travel times, traffic, and congestion on SR 99, city streets, and I-5.

### For More Information:

#### Visit the Web site at:

[www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/viaduct](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/viaduct)

#### Call the hotline:

206-269-4421

#### Send an e-mail to:

[viaduct@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:viaduct@wsdot.wa.gov)

#### Send a letter to:

Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project  
c/o Washington State Department of Transportation  
999 Third Avenue, Suite 2424  
Seattle, WA 98104

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